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ABSTRACT

Efforts at diversifying and pluralizing curricula in English departments have been under way long enough for many to realize that simply adding a few texts by writers historically omitted will not promote truly broadened learning. A course on "minority literature" (Native-American, Asian-American, African American, and Hispanic) for the Women's Studies Department at the University of Minnesota proved to be a pedagogical experiment as well as an opportunity to teach fiction by nonwhite women. The class was divided into four families, or small research teams, each responsible for reporting to the entire class on one aspect of culture for three of the units. The four areas of culture chosen for study were music, visual arts, mythology/religion/spirituality, and family and state structure/governance. One of the highlights of the reports was their diversity of format. Writing assignments were the other major component of the course. The assumption behind all writing assignments was that for white students to interact with literature written by "nonwhite" authors requires a new set of critical criteria and modes for analyzing and discussing texts. It was essential to break down defenses, especially well learned by honors students, thereby enabling them to make often painful connections between text and self. The assignments were centered around a series of open-ended responses to questionnaires and reflections and responses in student journals. The course was a major success, though future courses of this type would probably concentrate on two rather than three cultures because of the restraints of time. (Appendixes include a student questionnaire, journal guidelines, and writing assignments.) (TB)

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Multicultural Nests: Finding a Writing Voice about Literature by Women of Color

Toni A. H. McNaron and Pamela J. Olano

No. 4 • 1993

TECHNICAL REPORT SERIES

CENTER FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES OF WRITING

LILLIAN BRIDWELL-BOWLES, SERIES EDITOR

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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MINNEAPOLIS, MN

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Preface

THIS TECHNICAL REPORT is the result of a research project funded by the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of Writing (CISW) at the University of Minnesota. It is part of a growing series of publications designed to support "writing across the curriculum" at the University of Minnesota and is available from the CISW.

The Center annually funds projects that attempt to study any of the following topics:

- characteristics of writing across the University's curriculum;
- status reports on students' writing abilities at the University;
- the connections between writing and learning in all fields;
- the characteristics of writing beyond the academy;
- the effects of ethnicity, race, class, and gender on writing; and
- curricular reform through writing.

This particular technical report by Professor Toni A. H. McNaron of the English Department and the Women's Studies Department and her research assistant, Pamela J. Olano of the same departments, highlights their ongoing efforts to support innovative teaching at the University, especially attempts to diversify and pluralize the curriculum. The class which was the site of their project was the first course bearing honors credit ever to be offered by Women's Studies so it had a number of mandates: (1) it should be imaginatively conceived, (2) it should be rigorous, and (3) it should engage students with some of the most challenging questions facing the interdisciplinary field of Women's Studies. Because of their commitment to improving the writing abilities of University students, McNaron and Olano also decided that the course should be a "writing-intensive" course of the kind currently being recommended at the University. Their project was a success, by all accounts, and now even more so because it can stand as a model for others designing such courses.

The writing component was well developed and documented throughout the course. Readers will find a rationale for the ways writing was used to further the goals of the class. They will also find candid discussions for revising the course based upon the project's outcomes. The authors' description of the various stages of the course also provides a useful framework for developing writing activities.

Although the integration of writing into the goals of the course was of key interest to the Center, the course also dealt with another common problem at the University—how to prepare students for a diverse culture when classes are predominantly populated by white, often middle class, students. In this case, most of the students were also white women, narrowing the range even further. The creation of "multicultural nests" and family groupings is an experiment in cultural immersion that should be helpful to many readers.

One of the Center's goals is to disseminate the results of its funded projects as broadly as possible within the University community and on a national level. We invite responses to and discussion of McNaron and Olano's findings and interpretations.

Lillian Bridwell-Bowles, Series Editor
Susan Batchelder, Editor
March 1993

Introduction

EFFORTS AT DIVERSIFYING and pluralizing curricula in English departments have been underway long enough for many of us to realize that simply adding a few texts by writers historically omitted will not promote truly broadened learning. This course on "minority literature" for the Women's Studies Department at the University of Minnesota proved to be a pedagogical experiment as well as an opportunity to teach fiction by nonwhite women. Because the Center for Research in Interdisciplinary Writing seemed congenial to fledgling ideas, the grant submission proposed to construct a teaching team comprised by an English/Women's Studies professor and a research assistant with training in composition theory as well as a developed feminist consciousness. Together we designed and executed this course entitled "Multicultural Nests." The plan was to have students study the cultures of each of the four women writers we were to read: Native American, Asian-American, African-American, and Hispanic. The fictive works assigned were *Night-Flying Woman*, by Ignatia Broker; *The Joy Luck Club*, by Amy Tan; *Beloved*, by Toni Morrison; *and The House of Spirits*, by Isabel Allende.

The class, also unique by virtue of its being the first Women's Studies honors course, drew primarily white women students; the exceptions were the three men and two minority students enrolled. We divided the class into four "families," or small research teams, each responsible for reporting to the entire class on one aspect of culture for three of the units. (Because we launched into our work on Native American culture the very first day, a lecture format was employed rather than group reports. In their final evaluation interviews, several students remarked that they would have liked to have had similar reports for this culture as for the others so that there could be consistency in that regard.

The four areas of culture chosen for study were Music, Visual Arts, Mythology/Religion/Spirituality, and Family and State Structure/Governance. While asking students for their preferences, the students were assigned to their families based on criteria including background information, individual interests, personal experience and attitudes. The name "family" was chosen for these teams, rather than "small group" because of an experience in a Ford Foundation Workshop on Native American women. There it was suggested that the "family" designation could motivate

students to learn to work together in the face of possible personality clashes rather than to seek reassignments in order to avoid conflict. While this sounded on the surface like a valuable learning adjunct, in practice it was not altogether successful. Students liked the term because it suggested a higher degree of commitment than they acknowledged feeling in the usual work groups. However, several commented that it replicated a condition in the larger world, i.e. nuclear families from which it is often impossible to exit, often oppressive and even abusive to children, especially girls. Upon reflection, then, our recommendation would be to retain the term for its positive connotations with the stipulation that if students find themselves in units with students with whom they have had past difficulties, they have the option to ask for reassignment, facilitated by the faculty of the course.

Family Reports

In the first round of reports, each family was over-prepared for the time allowed for presentations (thirty minutes, including discussion/question periods). This caused considerable frustration, especially in the one instance where a few students speaking first took up much more than their proportionate share of the total time, leaving later voices almost no space in which to present the considerable findings they had come to class to share. We suggested that each family parcel out the time so that monopolization might be kept to a minimum; an evenness was achieved for future presentations. We also discussed with them various kinds of "knowledge," accenting that linear reports of factual material might not be the most effective format for them to follow. This allowed us to bring in elements of feminist pedagogical theory which validate experiential learning and personal distillation of factual matter. The second round of reports reflected their assimilation of our discussion and were much less anxiety-ridden for the families involved. These reports were more engaging and facilitated active learning of the sort we both have found so helpful in our regular courses. Supplemental handouts, containing the fascinating historical information they were discovering and finding so compelling, were distributed by each group.

One of the highlights of the family reports was their diversity of format. When the Visual Arts family shared their Hispanic report, they brought carnival/religious masks which the class was able to handle and peer out from during the presentation. This emerged as one of the most vividly remembered days of the entire quarter. Other such high points included a presentation of a calendar containing Frida Kahlo's art which a family member used to illustrate her symbolism; a group exercise in which we collected randomly placed flashcards and were asked to group the key cultural traits into logical sets to illustrate theories of African-American family structure; a vivid description by one family member of her visit to a local black church service and how that experience brought home what she was learning about religion for that culture; the wonderful tapes played before class so that we filtered into the room to the strains of African-American music. One other day emerged

for many as particularly helpful: a Japanese graduate student hearing of the course offered to come into class and perform a tea ritual, explaining and answering questions after the event itself had been enacted. This helped students understand the highly stylized and formal structure within many Asian homes, thereby facilitating their comprehension of the conflicts often dramatized in Amy Tan's novel.

In every instance, even the most frustrating ones, students found these reports intellectually empowering because they were themselves the sources of the background information rather than an "authority/teacher." They also felt that learning the historical and cultural background in this manner imprinted it much more clearly in their minds than if they had received the same information through lectures or through reading assignments about the cultures under investigation.

Writing Goals

The assumption behind all our writing assignments was that for white students to interact with literature written by nonwhite authors requires a new set of critical criteria and modes for analyzing and discussing texts. Furthermore, coming from our grounding in feminist theory which recognizes the silencing of women's voices, we both assumed that the women in our class would not be in full possession of their voices—either personal or academic. Indeed, we believed that because our students had learned to perform within the academy, whatever powerful voice they might once have had as children or young people might well have been blunted. Our experience with the students bore out virtually all these preconceptions.

Our goal in setting up writing exercises was to empower our students in general and to assist them in approaching texts constructed along significantly different axes from those with which they would be most familiar. Initially, we knew more clearly what this meant *not* to do than what it might mean *to* do. We did not want students to write routine papers about images of dark and light in a given work, about symbolism contained and developed in a given novel, about studies in character motivation. Such topics presuppose knowledge of whatever larger culture from which the particular literary work has sprung and often allow students to avoid more difficult personal interaction with texts.

Since we were planning a Women's Studies course, we knew we wanted students to concern themselves with gender relations; but even here, we were on new ground. For instance, several of the books represent scenes of violence by a man against a woman close to him. While in no way sanctioning or "explaining away" such behavior, we did hope that the students could gain sufficient knowledge of how entire cultural groups can be marginalized and brutalized by the dominant society. They might then be able to understand that the ever-prevalent violence middle-class white men inflict on middle-class white women occurs in a different context.

We felt it essential to break down defenses, especially well-learned by honors students, thereby enabling them to make often painful connections between text and self. Simultaneously, however, we wanted them not to expropriate the texts and form premature or romantic connections between, say, a second generation Chinese daughter arguing with her mother about which language to speak or which clothes to wear and their own struggles with their mothers about how late to stay out or whom to date. Designing writing assignments which might propel our students into the texts in unambiguous and respectful ways led us to design several fresh assignments.

One of the most positive writing activities involved spontaneous exercises, posed by the instructor and executed by students and faculty alike. In two instances, this entailed reading aloud some provocative passage from the novel under discussion and then allowing ten minutes for free-associational writing. Another instance was centered around their responses to some central character or thematic idea. In all instances, students were invited but in no way coerced to share what they had written with the entire class immediately after the exercise was completed. Because the ones read were often stunning, we collected all of them for our growing files of student-generated materials. The students in general found these brief and unrehearsed exercises immensely challenging and empowering of their voices. Perhaps the very spontaneity prevented the kinds of "tightening up" that occur when some students are faced with a formal, take-home writing assignment. In any event, this strategy worked to enliven discussion and to increase student's perception of themselves as persons capable of reflecting on difficult subject matter at a moment's notice.

While these spontaneous writing exercises were helpful to the students, the more structured assignments were at the heart of our work on voice. Because they are so central, we will discuss them separately.

Writing Implementation

All writing tasks were developed to answer specific questions:

- What forms of writing will help clarify the complex issues surrounding the diversity that these students will encounter in the course?
- How can the struggles/successes that students experience as they try to capture this diversity on paper be best described?
- What uses of writing best enhance the social/political/cultural goals of this course?
- How can we enable students to integrate their beliefs/attitudes with other experiences/attitudes/knowledge/beliefs which are presented/encountered during the course?
- What activities will best facilitate students' interaction with "multidimensional" realities?

Using these questions as foundations, our goals were to provide a forum for students' explorations of attitudes and beliefs, to "enable" students as knowers and as learners in their encounters with multiple realities, and to incorporate writing experiences as an integral part of student self-expression, investigation, and development.

Writing assignments were structured in five stages: Initial Engagement—Open-ended Responses; Focus Groups; Narratives; Return Engagement—Open-ended Responses; and In-depth Interviews (Case Studies). The five stages represented an integrated program for eliciting students' responses at various points during the course and for identifying students' changing patterns of awareness/ attitudes. At each stage, oral and written communication was emphasized in both individual and collaborative formats.

Stage One:
Initial Engagement—Articulation of Open-ended Responses

This writing assignment was distributed prior to course start-up. Students received an advance mailing containing a comprehensive questionnaire (See Appendix A). They were asked to bring the completed written responses to the first day of class. The format of the questionnaire, "Written Responses to Open-ended Questions," focused on the following.

•Attitudes/Opinions:
Students were provided with a series of open-ended questions designed to focus their attention on pre-existing attitudes and opinions prior to engagement with course materials. Initial questions took the form of anecdotal narratives/free association. Embedded questions focused on students as *knowers* (that is, they were asked to identify their own knowledge and belief structures prior to the course). Once students described their ideological positions, an additional question asked them to focus upon *why* they held these beliefs/this knowledge, how they ascertained these perceptions, what events influenced their attitudes.

•Background and Experience:
Included in this "survey" were a series of queries designed to identify students' own ethnic backgrounds and personal experiences with diversity and in multicultural settings.

•Self-Concept:
Students selected a variety of possible *identifiers/locators* that they believed were integral parts of their personal identities. (BEM Personality Inventory was used in addition to other descriptive terms.) These self-concept identifiers/locators formed some of the *threads* that students were asked to reflect upon in future assignments.

Stage Two: Focus Groups

Following the completion of open-ended survey, students were asked to schedule a thirty to forty-five minute focus group meeting with the research assistant. These focus groups participated in loosely structured discussions which were designed to elicit deeper consideration of the course issues. Groups were constructed with two goals in mind:

•Diversity:
Students were selected for interaction based upon a diversity of ethnic and attitudinal characteristics/experiences (as much as is possible given Minnesota's student population) determined by the open-ended responses.
•Homogeneity:
Students were selected for interaction based upon common responses and/or similarity of attitudes/experiences as indicated by their responses to open-ended survey questions.

Size and number of groups were determined by course enrollment and student responses. Students were asked to rank the four "family" groups according to their own level of interest. In every case, they were assigned to their first or second interest rating. The research assistant and/or instructor were present at each focus group discussion: initial, mid-course, and closing interview. She/they did not lead the discussions but served only as facilitator(s). Students were encouraged to give serious consideration to what motivated their responses.

Stage Three: Structured Assignments

During the first week of class students were asked to begin a Reflections/Responses Journal (See Appendix B) which required two types of considerations: (1) responses to course materials, and (2) reflections on their own opinions and attitudes in relation to issues of diversity and multicultural experiences. These journals served as spring-boards for class discussion and written assignments.

We were especially interested in the changing perceptions of the student as the course progressed and as she/he became more familiar with the four cultures considered. Additionally, the student was asked to explore her/his own "differences" from the culture in which she/he lives, drawing upon lived experience or perceived identities. Students were asked to follow threads of their own experiences/perceptions in the personal narratives and to weave a tapestry between/among the perceptions expressed by the writers/materials which they encounter in the course. The purpose of this written exercise was to acquaint students with the multi-dimensional realities of human existence. Through planned and free writing exercises in the journals and through the compilation of personal narratives, students created a record of their intellectual and attitudinal development/adjustments/ changing views. Personal narratives and journals served as a paper-trail to be used in further considerations by the instructor/research assistant. Other structured assignments included retelling of family legends, a comparison/contrast exercise on women's ways of knowing as demonstrated in the novels, and student selected journal entries (See Appendix C).

Stage Four: Return Engagement—Open-ended Responses

During the final week of class, students again responded to the same set of open-ended questions presented at the outset of the course. Shifted/static attitudes were clearly discernible.

Stage Five: Case Studies/ Interviews

Using student involvement and journals as guides, instructors selected six students for case study interviews. Thirty-minute nterviews were recorded for future transcription. Case Studies were designed to add a further dimension to results and supplied in-depth information articulated in the student's own voice. The use of both oral and written narration was crucial to determining students' changing perceptions.

Conclusions/Recommendations

Like the man who "discovered" rubber, we found that one of our hypotheses was true quite by accident. Having originally planned that each family would give three cultural reports, we were convinced by the end of the first round that this expectation was simply too stringent for the time constraints inherent in a quarter system. To ease student tension, which seemed fairly high at that point, we suggested that the syllabus be altered to allow for the study of only three cultures, accompanied by two rounds of student reports. While the class welcomed more time to pursue their remaining culture, all of them were sorry to lose the opportunity to study as many different groups as

possible. After much serious discussion, the class decided to drop reports on Asian-American culture but to retain the novel originally assigned. Their rationale was a sound one in theory: it was better to have a little exposure to the culture than to lose it entirely.

When the class read Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*, we sensed a shallowness in the discussion, a reversion to familiar literary maneuvers such as talking about imagery or making too easy comparisons between the Chinese-American mother-daughter pairs and our own experiences with our mothers or daughters. While it was at this point in the course that we invited a Japanese student to conduct a formal tea ceremony, the passive watching of this event in no way paralleled their previous active engagement in researching the cultural and historical background for themselves.

During exit interviews and in written evaluative remarks, many students commented on how different it was to read Tan's novel without a cultural context than it was to deal with the other fictional pieces. By doing so, they in effect volunteered that our assumptions about the value of surrounding nonwhite literatures with cultural contexts, of imbedding fiction within a carefully built "nest," would enhance student appreciation and understanding measurably.

A further hypothesis behind this experiment concerned student writing: we believed that by constructing contextual nests and by designing atypical writing assignments, a class of essentially white students could discover fresh and non-appropriational modes for expressing their responses to multicultural literature. Again, the alteration of the syllabus assisted us in unpredictable ways because students also commented that they were less sure of what they wrote about Tan than they were in the other cases.

We believe this course was a major success in breaking away from conventional literary approaches to fiction written by and reflecting cultures radically different from the one for which such approaches were intended. Further, we believe that asking students to respond more personally in their written work can establish a valid critical perspective on this diverse literature, helping to insure against textual misreading and a too-easy assumption of likeness ignoring crucial axes of race and class while relying solely on gender considerations.

Our primary recommendations for future offerings of this kind are to confine a quarter's study to only two cultures and for faculty to spend more time building in mechanisms to foster trust among students as early in the course as possible. Limiting a course to the study of two cultures would allow for two important changes from what was possible in this experimental instance: each small research group or family could make more than one report on each culture, allowing them to immerse themselves much more fully in whatever aspect of the culture they were studying; several fictional works by writers of each culture could be assigned, thereby suggesting the variety of literary production within these diverse cultures.

As for our second recommendation, we have observed in retrospect that issues of trust were a major factor in creating the various twists and turns of the course. Both the family groups and

students' individual interactions with the instructors demonstrated their concerns about personal safety: emotional and peer group acceptance. Overall, students found themselves deeply involved in serious introspection and reexamination of their attitudes and beliefs. Many found this to be disconcerting and class discussion often turned to intense conversations during which students tried to "re-position" themselves. This re-positioning often required that students express culturally ingrained beliefs in the context of class discussion. Without the "protection" of academic distance, they often felt more exposed than usual. Moreover, because so much of the written activity sought to involve students both on a personal and an intellectual level, many individuals felt more vulnerable than in other classes. In the final analysis, however, students believed this to be one of the most positive aspects of the course due mainly to the atmosphere maintained by the larger and smaller groups.

Perhaps the most complex interactions occurred within the families. While no student expressed dissatisfaction with the idea, many were not happy with the day-by-day interactions of the teams. Again, problems which confronted the family groups were not foreseen by the instructors: out-of-class personal clashes, reluctance of the two students of color to participate wholeheartedly with their family groups, scheduling incompatibilities. While some families were able to construct mutually convenient meetings, others were never able to do so. Additionally, attrition (students dropped the course, took incompletes, or were engaged in directed studies) affected the family dynamics.

As one student revealed in the closing case study, the family structure of the groups both facilitated and hindered her learning experience. When asked to elaborate, she spoke about higher expectations and deeper anxiety. It was her belief that the term "family" brought increased pressure to perform and more painful disappointments. "Families are like that," she concluded. "Although all the houses on a particular block look the same, the lives behind those doors are as unique as the individuals. At least with your real family you have a history—be it positive or negative. With our class families, I always felt outside of things. It took us a long time to develop the family 'history' that we needed to work together."

The family format obviously carries a number of unspoken and unexamined factors which need more careful consideration. In future course offerings, we would discuss different connotations of the term "family," as well as the variety of structures which that term implies.

Finally, the writing component of the course provided a simultaneous record of students' experiences and changing perceptions. Their frustrations and their breakthroughs were recorded in the pages of their journals. The "private" inscription of their feelings and the shared "public" readings of short, spontaneous in-class writing assignments provided important channels for communication. Written expression helped many class members to process the whirlwind of emotions and intellectual challenges that they encountered.

Appendices

These appendices include the student questionnaire (Appendix A), journal guidelines (Appendix B), and writing assignments (Appendix C) discussed in the body of this report.

Appendix A:
Student Questionnaire

SELF CONCEPT IDENTIFIERS / LOCATORS QUESTIONNAIRE

(NOTE: ALL RESPONSES ARE OPTIONAL)

PART ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

NAME: ADDRESS: PHONE:

DATE OF BIRTH:
PLACE OF BIRTH:
ETHNIC/RACIAL AFFILIATION/IDENTIFICATION:
RELIGIOUS TRAINING OR AFFILIATION:
HIGH SCHOOLS ATTENDED:
COLLEGES ATTENDED:
FIELD OF STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY:
HONORS PROGRAM PARTICIPANT (LENGTH OF TIME):
OTHER WOMEN'S STUDIES COURSE WORK:
CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO WHICH I BELONG:

OPTIONAL COMMENTARY ON ANY OF THE ABOVE:

PART TWO: LOCATION / CONSTRUCTION - PERSONAL IDENTITY
PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INQUIRIES.

I VIEW MY POSITION AS A WOMAN / MAN WITHIN THE LARGER CULTURE AS

I AM POLITICALLY ACTIVE OR INTERESTED IN

I IDENTIFY MY SEXUAL / AFFECTIONAL PREFERENCE / ORIENTATION AS

I IDENTIFY MY CLASS IDENTITY AS _____. WHAT I PERCEIVE AS MY CLASS IDENTITY CONSISTS OF

MY MULTI-CULTURAL EXPERIENCES HAVE INVOLVED

I WOULD DESCRIBE MY EXPERIENCES WITHIN MY FAMILY OF ORIGIN AS

MY PERCEPTION OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY IN WHICH I GREW UP OR NOW LIVE IS

I HAVE LIVED MOST OF MY LIFE IN A (RURAL OR URBAN) SETTING. THIS HAS HELPED TO CONSTRUCT MY SELF-CONCEPT IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER:

I IDENTIFY REGIONALLY WITH THE _____ PART OF THE COUNTRY.
WHAT I PERCEIVE AS MY REGIONAL IDENTITY CONSISTS OF

I HAVE/HAVE NOT TRAVELED/LIVED OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES. I REMEMBER MY EXPERIENCES IN OTHER CULTURES AS

AN ANECDOTE WHICH STAYS WITH ME FROM MY MULTI-CULTURAL, MULTI-RACIAL, OR MULTI-ETHNIC EXPERIENCE IS:

I PERCEIVE / LOCATE IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF MY IDENTITY TO BE

PART FOUR: FREE ASSOCIATION / REFLECTIONS

Please complete the following ASSOCIATION CLUSTERS.
Fill in the SPACES between the arrows with strings of words which come to mind as you consider each category. After completing the association clusters, please reflect on your responses.

NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE:

IMAGES: ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

MUSIC: ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS / MYTHS / SPIRITUALITY:

➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

FAMILY STRUCTURES: ➡ ➡ ➡

➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

ART: ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

REFLECTIONS:

WHEN I REFLECT ON MY RESPONSES, I RECOGNIZE MY UNDERLYING PERCEPTION OF NATIVE-AMERICANS TO BE . . .

I BELIEVE MY PERCEPTIONS DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF . . .

MEMORY WORK: I REMEMBER A PARTICULAR INTERACTON THAT HAS INFLUENCED MY PERCEPTIONS . . .

AFRO-AMERICAN CULTURE:

IMAGES: ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

MUSIC: ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS / MYTHS / SPIRITUALITY:

➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

FAMILY STRUCTURES: ➡ ➡ ➡

➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

ART: ➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

➡ ➡ ➡ ➡

REFLECTIONS:

WHEN I REFLECT ON MY RESPONSES, I RECOGNIZE MY UNDERLYING PERCEPTION OF AFRO-AMERICANS TO BE . . .

I BELIEVE MY PERCEPTIONS DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF . . .

MEMORY WORK: I REMEMBER A PARTICULAR INTERACTION THAT HAS INFLUENCED MY PERCEPTIONS . . .

HISPANIC CULTURE:

IMAGES:

MUSIC:

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS / MYTHS / SPIRITUALITY:

FAMILY STRUCTURES:

ART:

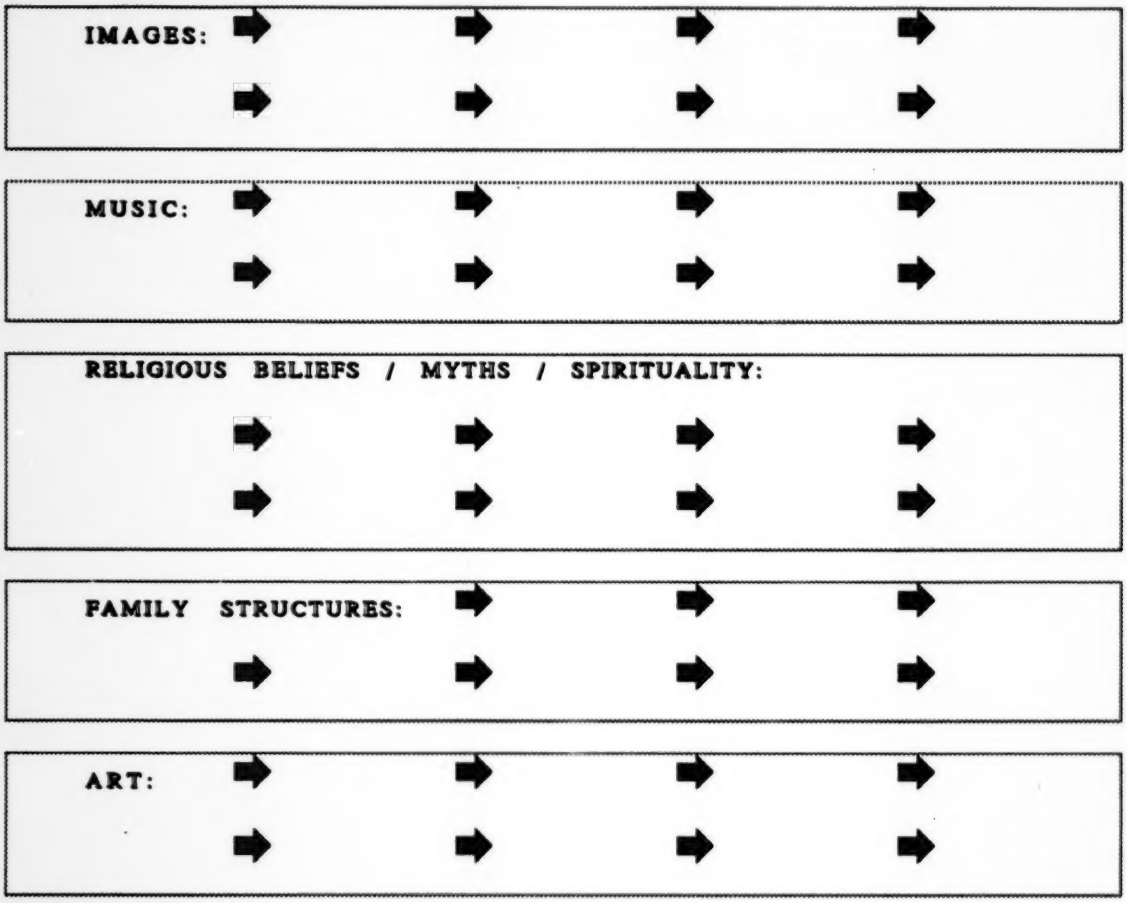
REFLECTIONS:

WHEN I REFLECT ON MY RESPONSES, I RECOGNIZE MY UNDERLYING PERCEPTION OF HISPANIC-AMERICANS TO BE . . .

I BELIEVE MY PERCEPTIONS DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF . . .

MEMORY WORK: I REMEMBER A PARTICULAR INTERACTION THAT HAS INFLUENCED MY PERCEPTION . . .

ASIAN-AMERICAN CULTURE:



REFLECTIONS:

WHEN I REFLECT ON MY RESPONSES, I RECOGNIZE MY UNDERLYING PERCEPTION OF ASIAN-AMERICANS TO BE . . .

I BELIEVE MY PERCEPTIONS DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF . . .

MEMORY WORK: I REMEMBER A PARTICULAR INTERACTION THAT HAS INFLUENCED MY PERCEPTIONS . . .

Appendix B:
Journal Guidelines

JOURNAL GUIDELINES

RESPONSES AND REFLECTIONS

Your journal is a dual record of your reactions to the course materials.

"Side One" is called the **RESPONSES SECTION** and can be consider your ACADEMIC engagement with the reading materials. We will provide you with questions which can be used to help you in your investigations and inquiries.

"Side Two" is called the **REFLECTIONS SECTION**. Here you will record your "gut" reactions, your introspections, your inner journeys as you encounter new or challenging questions. We hope that you will use this section of your journal to investigate your personal reactions to the reading material. Please feel free to be creative in this section. Poetry, short "stories" or plays, dialogues, stream of consciousness, free association, personal narratives, lyrics, quotes, or just straight-forward "words on the page"... you may employ ANY writing strategy to articulate your thoughts.

THE LOGISTICS: Journaling works best in a permanently-bound notebook. This can be something special or just a plain notebook. Pages should be standard size: 8.5 x 11. Entries should be substantive and reflect your serious engagement with the material. Try to write before each class meeting--a page of response, a page of reflection. This may vary according to your need to record your thoughts on a given subject or issue.

Try this: Journaling is more interesting if you challenge yourself to make each entry an important part of your experience in this course. We suggest that you PERSONALIZE your journal in some way. Add graphics, illustrations, cut-outs, whatever--to make this "YOURS." This is NOT just a journal...you are CREATING a book of YOUR impressions.

After the first page in your journal where you should record important information--name, course, meeting place, phone number, other miscellaneous info--use the LEFT-HAND SIDE of each DOUBLE PAGE for your RESPONSES, the RIGHT-HAND SIDE for your REFLECTIONS. You may continue an entry beyond the one-page minimum, but be sure to keep your RESPONSES on LEFT pages, your REFLECTIONS on RIGHT pages. With this system you can "bounce" your thoughts in various directions, using one side or the other as a SPRINGBOARD for ideas. Try this system, and let us know if you like it. **ALWAYS DATE EACH ENTRY.**

Responses	Reflections

We will collect journals periodically and we will read and respond to your investigations. If at any time you wish to keep an entry PRIVATE, simply fold that page over and we will respect your wishes.

Appendix C:
Writing Assignments

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 1:

Night Flying Woman is both a personal narrative and a way of transmitting historical information, myth, and memories to another generation. The narrative is one of struggle and perserverance, joy and sorrow. In a sense, the novel preserves the heritage of the Ojibway tribe through **storytelling.**

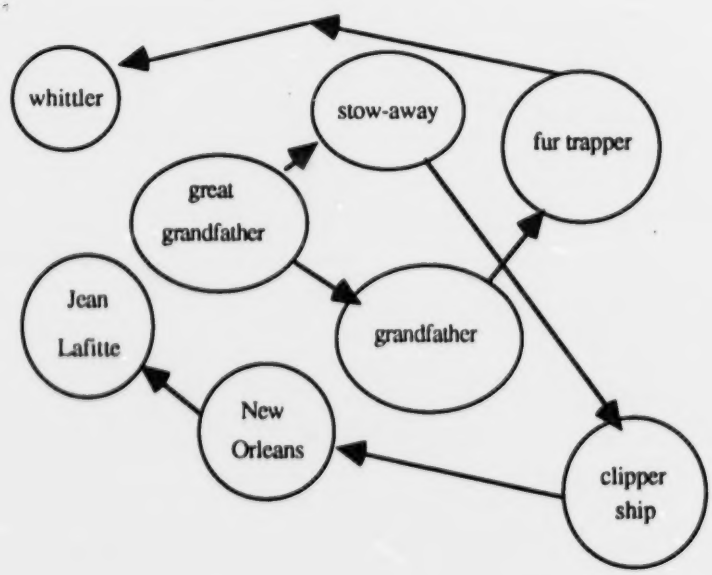
Our first writing assignment will ask you to perform a similar task. We are all members of a particular racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, or other kind of group. We each have a heritage which can be characterized in a number of different ways. Most of us have experienced being a **LISTENER** when stories have been told--stories which relate to family units, national groups, or global events.

In this assignment, I would like you to explore STORYTELLING by re-telling a story which was passed down to you **by word of mouth** by an elder. This person may or may not be/have been related to you. This story could be one which recaps a family incident, an ancestoral anecdote, a cultural myth, or any similar narrative.

If you note any connections between the story you retell and the novel, please reflect upon those connections. If you feel your story demonstrates a different set of realities, consider why this may be so.

If you have trouble remembering a story that has been told to you, try a **FREE ASSOCIATION** technique. Cluster your thoughts by developing a graphic like the one illustrated here. I have filled in a story from my own recollection as an example. Clustering sometimes frees up your memory and allows you to make leaps in your imagination.

Write in your best form. Length: 3-4 paragraphs.



WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2:

Submit your ten favorite journal entries. These should contain both the response and reflection entries. Keep in mind that we are interested in sharing what you consider to be important breakthroughs or realizations. Your reflections may be on the text or on a tangent that you explored as a result of class discussion, family matters, reading, etc.

Your reader will engage in a written conversation with you concerning your entries. We invite you to respond to these comments. This is an opportunity to set up another channel of communication.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT 3:

Write a short response to the following (1-2 pages). Discuss your understanding of the statement and use an example from each of the three novels to explain your comments.

WOMEN'S WAYS OF KNOWING ARE OFTEN DESCRIBED AS MULTI-VOCAL.

Other Considerations: (These may be used as guidelines for your exploration)

- Do you see similarities/differences between women's ways of knowing in the three cultures we have studied?
- Which woman particularly engaged you in internal reflection?
- Did you identify more with a particular character? Why?
- How are women's ways of knowing portrayed in a different light than those of the male characters in the novels?

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